

Husband: **THOMAS SHEPHERD, SENIOR¹**

Born: Circa 1646 England
 Married: 26 April 1670 Salem County, NJ
 Died: 1720 Fenwicks Colony, Salem County, NJ
 Buried:

Father: DAVID SHEPHERD
 Mother: RACHEL WAUSBOUGH

Wife: **ANN WANSBROUGH²**

Born: Circa 1650 England
 Died: 1728
 Buried:

Father: *ROBERT WANSBROUGH (1630 – ?)*
 Mother: *SARA HAYTER (1633 – ?)*

Issue:

1) JAMES SHEPHERD	Circa 1671	Salem County, NJ
2) MOSES SHEPHERD	1673	Fairfield Township, Cumberland Co, NJ
3) DAVID SHEPHERD	1675	Salem County, NJ
4) THOMAS SHEPHERD, JUNIOR	1678	CLOUGH-KEATING, CO. TIPPERARY, IRE
5) ANN SHEPHERD	1680	Fairfield Township, Cumberland Co, NJ
6) ROBERT SHEPHERD	1682	

The SHEPHERD family embraced the *Particular Baptist* views that typified the 1641 revival and one of our ancestors was an officer in the Cromwell's army. The SHEPHERD family has been characterized as being ardent Baptists and quite proud of their Cromwellian ancestor. The Irish SHEPHERD'S were centered in the *Castlejohn townland* in western County Tipperary on the border with County Kilkenny. The actual 15th century *Castle John* had been their home since the 1650s; the property remained in the SHEPHERD family until the mid-1800s and the ruins of the castle still mark our ancestral home.

JAMES, DAVID, JOHN and THOMAS SHEPHERD, four brothers, had all left Ireland for the last time by 1683; at least one, our subject THOMAS, had journeyed across the Atlantic and back in the early to mid 1670s. All four brothers settled on a neck of land called *Old Man's Creek* on the south side of Cohansey River, north of Back Creek. (Now this area is just south of the borough of Shiloh a couple miles west of Bridgeton) They called their land *Shrewsbury Neck* and it was here the first *Cohansey Baptist Church* was established by 1683. The church moved to its second location around 1690. Actually there were two Baptist congregations established within a year of each other near Cohansey in the 1680s: the earliest to be documented arrived with OBADIAH HOLMES from Swansea, Massachusetts in 1687; the other Baptist Church was the one our ancestors belonged to. They helped establish the *Killingsworth Baptist Church*, forerunner of the *Cohansey Baptist Church*, which was operating informally beginning in 1683. The church was

formally constituted in 1690. The two churches were completely separate until HOLMES left the area. After that the two congregations used the same buildings until 1710 when the two were merged into one church.

Based on the name *Shrewsbury Neck* many historians incorrectly assume that one or more of the brothers lived for a time at Shrewsbury in East Jersey; this statement ignores two very important facts:

- First: CAPTAIN THOMAS SHEPPARD, grandfather of our subject, is believed to have been born in County Shropshire, England. The town of Shrewsbury is the county seat for Shropshire and it would be a good candidate for naming your new home.
- Second: the records of the *Shrewsbury (NJ) Baptist Church* and the Shrewsbury (NJ) town council minutes are extant and there is no mention of anyone with the surname SHEPHERD appearing at this early date.

The Baptist Church was a connecting point for the inhabitants of Middletown in Monmouth County and Cohansey River area in Salem County. Each congregation has claimed various times to be the first Baptist Church in New Jersey; Middletown was operating informally at the Upper Meeting House a few miles west of Middletown at Baptisttown (now Holmdel) in 1667 when the area was first inhabited. The Middletown Baptist Church was formally constituted in 1688 and a Lower Meeting House was added at Middletown. The Upper Meeting House continues today as the Holmdel Baptist Church. Many Middletown inhabitants had lived in Cohansey and owned one thousand acres of land in Fenwick's Colony and one owner did have the name THOMAS SHEPHERD but this is a different person than our subject. Our SHEPHERD ancestors came to Cohansey in Fenwick's Colony to help establish a daughter church of the *Clough Keating Baptist Church* in Lower Ormond Barony in County Tipperary, Ireland. The mother church was founded around 1653 by THOMAS PATIENT, one of CROMWELL'S former officers, and the congregation was wholly English, being the soldiers from the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland. The *Clough Keating Church* lasted around two hundred years; the *Pittsgrove (NJ) Baptist Church* received a letter from that church in 1838. It was one of the strongest Irish Baptist churches, boasting of approximately 250 members in 1740. The earliest known reference to the church is found in the 1653 minute book of the *Cork Baptist Church*. The edifice has stood large and vacant for well over a century.

Why Fenwick's Colony? The religious toleration offered by FENWICK as well as the Quaker proprietors that controlled both the East and West Jersey provinces was a strong incentive for moving there, especially since the religious toleration enjoyed in Ireland during the Protectorate under CROMWELL had been slowly eroding since the Restoration of the English monarchy in 1660. MAJOR JOHN FENWICK, a Cromwellian soldier, plans to establish a colony became a reality in 1674. Familiarity with South Jersey in County Tipperary began no later than 1654 with the establishment of the *Clough Keating Baptist Church*; its founder, THOMAS PATIENT, had traveled through the area in the 1630s and even preached to the Cohansey settlement of the Lenni-Lenape Tribe; he brought his knowledge and experience of an unsettled South Jersey with him wherever he went. The Quaker influence was probably known to the SHEPHERD brothers as their mother ANN belonged to the Irish WANSBROUGH family who were known to be devout Quakers. Some writers offer the possibility that the SHEPHERD family heard of Cohansey through contact with ANDREW ROBINSON, a Quaker merchant who became a West Jersey Proprietor in March 1677 and lived less than twenty miles from *Castlejohn*. This is highly unlikely as ROBINSON'S

involvement in West Jersey came at least five years after THOMAS and ANN were married there!³ The daughter church was founded at Cohansey by 1688 by many Baptists from Clough Keating including our SHEPHERD ancestors.

There is a possibility that ANN WANSBROUGH is the second wife of THOMAS. A marriage between a THOMAS SHEPHERD and ANN SAMBSON in the mid-1660s, coupled with the scarcity of persons named THOMAS SHEPHERD, suggests that ANN SAMBSON may have been his first wife. If this proves to be true that first marriage would date to around 1666, when THOMAS was twenty years old. This supposed first wife is gone, for unknown reasons, by the end of 1669 which is the latest that THOMAS left for his first trip to West Jersey.

THOMAS SHEPHERD and ANN WANSBROUGH had to have traveled to Cohansey prior to being married there in 1670 but it is not known who would have officiated as there was little, if any, Baptist presence in region at this early date. They likely knew each other in County Tipperary and may have planned to get married in Cohansey. THOMAS and ANN returned to Ireland sometime after 1675, probably in 1677 and, with the birth of their son THOMAS, stayed through 1679 as they were in South Jersey, or at the least, ANN was in South Jersey when their daughter ANN was born in 1680.

PROPERTY

(The 3 deeds below are in NEW JERSEY COLONIAL RECORDS: Volume 21 Calendar of Records 1664-1703, pp. 325, 601; the individual citations are from the New Jersey Department of State Non-Governmental Records – East and West Jersey Proprietors database at: <http://www.nj.gov/state/archives/catppropri.html>)

1690 Sept. 29. Do. JONATHAN WLLING of Cesariae R. alias Chohansey, Salem Co., to THOMAS SHEPHARD of the same place, yeoman, for 100 acres, part of a 500 a. lot granted by JOHN FENWICK to THOMAS POTTER March 4, 1677-8, sold by said POTTER to JOHN IRESON May 12, 1683, by said IRESON to JOHN CLARKE November 16, 1685, and by said CLARKE to present grantor Feb. 13, 1687-8. Brother JAMES also purchased a 100 parcel from this same tract while brother JOHN purchased 150 acres; all three deeds are recorded on the same date. [Department of State Secretary of State's Office Deeds, Surveys and Commissions, ca. 1650-1856, Sal 5, Folio 73]

1693 June 9. Indian Deed. MANHAUXETT and other Indians to JEREMIAH BASSE on behalf of the W. J. Society, for the land between Cohansick Creek and Morris R., beginning at the head of Cohanzie, except a neck between Cohanzie and the River of Tweed from WM. JOHNSTON's plantation on Cohanzie to THOMAS SHEPHEARD's. (WEST JESEY RECORDS -- LIBER B, PART 1. <http://www.westjerseyhistory.org/books/njaV21/njaWestJerseyRecords-LiberBpart1.shtml>)

1693 June 22. Do. Same to HESTER and RACHEL SHEPHERD, daughters of JAMES SHEPHERD dec'd, the consideration having been paid by THOMAS and DAVID SHEPHERD, both of Cesariae River, brothers and executors of said JAMES, for 34 acres, between THOMAS

SHEPHERD and WM. JOHNSON, like the preceding and the following part of the 1,000 a. tract bought of WM. BIDDLE Nov. 10, 1692

The THOMAS SHEPHERD in the following land transactions could be the same as our subject, but it is difficult to say for sure; transfers could just as easily belong to our subject's son.

On the 1st of October, 1692 LEONARD BERRYMAN, husbandman, gave a mortgage on one hundred acres near the Cesariae River (Cohansey?) to DAVID and THOMAS SHEPHERD, yeomen, who lived on that same river.⁴

On 22 June 1693 SAMUEL HEDGE of Salem Town sold eighty-six acres on Mehatquak Creek (aka River Tweed) to THOMAS SHEPHERD of Cesariae. The land was between that owned by HESTER SHEPHERD and JOHN SMITH.⁵

An Assignment of land in Salem County to THOMAS from DANIEL THIRAND was recorded on 16 April 1698.⁶

A series of land records covering some 990 acres to EVE, JOHN, and THOMAS SHEPHERD and involving WILLIAM BIDDLE and the Council of Proprietors were recorded in November and December 1704.⁷

Given the similarity of the surnames of THOMAS' wife and mother, speculation that they were probably related and one of the spellings is incorrect is logical given the unlikely occurrence of two such similar names appearing in the same area at this time, considering the religious turmoil happening.

Issue:

- 1) JAMES SHEPHERD: married ANNA (born 1674). One known child:
 - a) JAMES SHEPHERD, JUNIOR: born 1712.
- 2) MOSES SHEPHERD: some researchers have his birth recorded as 1698 which is not in line with the births of his siblings; married MARY DENNIS 1722 in NJ. She was born 7 April 1682. They both died in Fairfield Township, Cumberland County, NJ, MARY before the end of 1752 and MOSES before 13 January 1753. 6 known children were probably all born in NJ:
 - a) RACHEL SHEPHERD: born 1723; married MARK (?) REMINGTON before November 1752 in NJ. One known child:
 - i) MOSES REMINGTON: born before November 1752 in NJ.
 - b) THOMAS SHEPHERD: born ca 1724
 - c) MOSES SHEPHERD: born ca 1725; probably died before 1737.
 - d) NATHAN SHEPHERD: born 1726.
 - e) JOHN SHEPHERD: born 1730; married PRISCILLA WOOD in NJ. She was born 4 March 1733/1734 in Stoe Creek, Cumberland County, NJ.
 - f) SARAH SHEPHERD: born 1732.
 - g) MOSES SHEPHERD, JUNIOR: born 1737; died 1830.
 - h) MARY DENNIS SHEPHERD: born 1741.

- 4) DAVID SHEPHERD: married ANNA SHEPHERD (1705 – 1799); she was thought to be the daughter of DICKENSON SHEPHERD and EVA SHEPHERD; but the known year of birth for DAVID, 1675, which is thirty years before ANNA's, does not match with the year of birth cited for the spouse of DICKENSON and EVE's daughter ANNA which is 1701. Further research is required. The seven children attributed to DAVID and ANNA SHEPHERD therefore would not be the offspring of this DAVID.
- 3) THOMAS SHEPHERD, JUNIOR: married DEBORAH GROVER. Their story is continued in a separate section.
- 5) ANN SHEPHERD: married her first cousin JOSEPH SHEPHERD, son of THOMAS' brother DAVID and EVA (WALEN) SHEPHERD around 1707 in Cohansey, where they, in all likelihood, lived out their lives. Four known children.
- 6) ROBERT SHEPHERD: no known information.

The following is from a brief history of the *Cohansey Baptist Church* written by the REVEREND ROBERT KELSEY, pastor of that Church and sent to MORGAN EDWARDS, a Baptist historian from the late 18th century:

About the year 1683 some Baptists from the County of Tipperary in Ireland settled in the neighborhood of Cohansey; particularly DAVID SHEPPARD, THOMAS ABBOTT, WILLIAM BUTTON, etc. Those names are all English names and their parents were probably among the large number of English Protestants who settled in Ireland after the subjugation by the parliamentary forces under CROMWELL in 1651.

The Baptists of England, as of all other lands have ever been not only upholders of religious liberty, but equally zealous in seeking civil liberty. Large numbers of them served in the Parliamentary forces amongst the Royalists and must have been among those who received lands in Ireland, and settled there. During the reign of Charles the Second, from 1660 to 1685, the great pressure upon dissenters probably led these Irish Baptists to avail themselves of the peace and freedom of America. In doing so, no part of this country presented more attractions, civil and religious, of climate, soil, and easiness of access, than did South Jersey.

... [T]here is specific proof as to some of these settlers being Baptists. DAVID SHEPPARD had brothers, JOHN, THOMAS and JAMES who came with him and also settled in Back Neck. JOHN's and THOMAS's children and grandchildren were nearly all members of this church, and THOMAS himself in 1712 was a delegate from this church to the Philadelphia Association. JAMES SHEPPARD died in December 1690, leaving a widow and two infant daughters.

A leather bound book was bought for the use of the church and the first page is inscribed "This book was bought of BROTHER WILLIAM BUTTON of Cohansie for the use of the church that belongeth to BROTHER THOMAS KILLINGWORTH in the Year of our Lord, One Thousand Six Hundred and Ninety", now (at the time this was written) in possession of Salem County Historical Society. In the section "An account of the ages of the children of the members of the Congregation" appears the two children of JAMES and HESTER SHEPPARD

The first meetinghouse of the church was built in Shrewsbury Neck on the south side of the Cohansey River, below Green Swamp, and on property lately (as of the time of writing) belonging to WILLIAM MULFORD, deceased, and known as "The Old Farm" property. It was a log building and was probably not very large. That their first meetinghouse was built at that location is almost conclusive proof that there were more Baptists in Shrewsbury and Back Necks in Fairfield Township than now known. Of those nine constituent members whose names are given, the pastor lived at Salem and four others lived in Penns Neck beyond Salem, one lived at Greenwich and only three of them lived on the south side of the Cohansey.

A new site was selected in Lower Hopewell, near the Cohansey so those on the south of the river could cross in boats, while those at Bowentown could go to meet them at the new location. ROGER MAUL, by deed dated December 28th 1713 gave them the land where now is the old graveyard belonging to the church, about a quarter of a mile of Sheppard's Mill. The graveyard was afterwards enlarged by a deed of gift from NATHAN SHEPPARD, dated February 6, 1779, and contains in all about one and one-quarter acres of land. Here their second meetinghouse of frame was erected, probably in 1714, where their services were afterwards held. The place of crossing the Cohansey by those residing on the south side was from what was then known as Sheppard's Landing, and since known as "The Red House Farm" and owned (as of the time of writing) by THOMAS B. HUSTED, to a landing on the marsh on the edge of the upland, a little farther up the river on the north side where the remains of the old landing could still be seen a few years ago. This landing was about a mile south of the meetinghouse, and from its use for that purpose for nearly 90 years it became known as "Baptist Landing," a name which has ever since remained.

On February 3rd, 1798, the following is found in the church records: On Consideration had and motion made, resolved that a subscription be opened to obtain a sufficient sum of money to purchase a lot of land of THOMAS SHEPPARD situate nearly opposite the schoolhouse at Roadstown in the township of Hopewell and to build a new meetinghouse thereon, and that our clerk draw a subscription for that purpose payable at four equal payments at such time as he shall think will best answer the purpose for which it is designed." A note at the bottom signed by the church clerk, ISAAC WHEATON, says: "A subscription was drew agreeable to the above resolution and a number of subscribers entered on the same, but by reason of death of THOMAS SHEPPARD a title could not be obtained, therefore the above resolution rests without further proceedings therein. THOMAS SHEPPARD, the owner, died May 1798."

URIAH BACON, DAVID SHEPPARD, ISAAC MULFORD and JONATHAN BOWEN, ESQ. were appointed a committee to obtain subscriptions to pay for the lot and build a house of worship, to be payable in Four parts, on November 1st, 1799, May 1st and October 1st, 1800 and April 1st, 1801. The next day an agreement was made with SAMUEL ELWELL and wife RACHEL for three acres of ground, which was consummated December 16th, 1799, by a deed from said parties for the lot, 20 perches front along the road and 25 perches deep for the sum of \$120.00.

Endnotes

- ¹ All information contained herein, unless noted otherwise, was obtained from various genealogy websites on the internet and is the result of the research of others. This author has not verified the accuracy of any information contained herein.
- ² See FamilySearch page for James Shepherd in Shepherd Lineage file. Information in *italics* from there.
- ³ Rev. Joshua E. Wills, Historical Sketch of the Pittsgrove Baptist Church (Harper Printing Co., Philadelphia; 1915) pp. 52-70.
- ⁴ Department of State Secretary of State's Office Deeds, Surveys and Commissions, ca. 1650-1856, Sal 5, Folio 218.
- ⁵ Thomas Shourd, History and Genealogy of Fenwick Colony (George F Nixon, publ, Bridgeton, NJ; 1876) p. 202. Department of State Secretary of State's Office Deeds, Surveys and Commissions, ca. 1650-1856, Sal 5, Folio 280.
- ⁶ Department of State Secretary of State's Office Deeds, Surveys and Commissions, ca. 1650-1856, Sal 6, Folio 212.
- ⁷ General Board of Proprietors of the Eastern Division of New Jersey Road Book, ca. 1740-1902: WJ Loose Records 1704 – Biddle, William, 23185; Shepherd, Thomas – 23038. Department of State Secretary of State's Office Deeds, Surveys and Commissions, ca. 1650-1856: AAA, Folios 70, 71.